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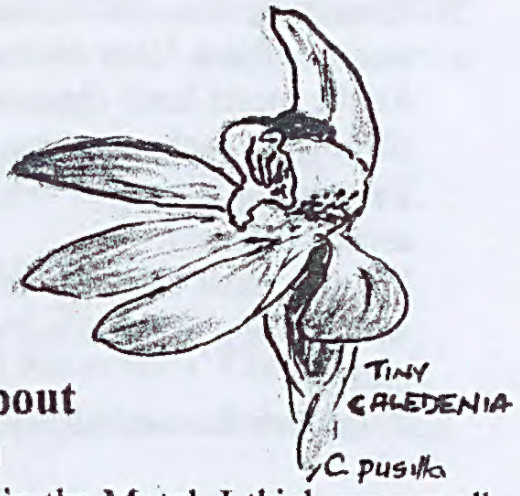

Chiltern Campout

29/8 - 2/9/04

Well, we called it a campout, but we stayed in the Motel. I think we are all getting soft.

We visited several wetlands during our stay, including Lake Anderson which is right in the township and within easy walking distance of our motel. Two others weren't very far from the township, either.

We visited the old brewery paddock late in the afternoon on our day of arrival, and found several orchids and other plants in flower on the way in, but the Golden Wattles would have to have been the highlight of that afternoon plant-wise. Out in the paddock they were just great mounds of gold.

On our second day we drove about 6 km to the Honeyeater Picnic area and walked some of the walking track. There were thousands of buttercups and lots of Brown Treecreepers.

In the afternoon we went out to the lakeswhich were a short distance out of town, and I added a Baillons Crake to my list, but I was on my own, and couldn't get anyone to come before it disappeared. Lesley waited with me for a few minutes, but by that time it was aware of our presence, and wasn't in the mood to be looked at.

We visited Eldorado, and had a most enjoyable time getting a very tidy bird list, but the thing that intrigued some of us there was one of the mistletoes - was it just another form of Grey Mistletoe, or was is another species? We drove on and had lunch after crossing Reedy Creek on a ford which was a bit deeper than I liked, but Hans drove across and back and proved to us all that it could be done, so over we went! Where we were was unburnt, but nearby hilltops showed some of the damage by the fires the Summer before last.

Varnish Wattle and *A. buxifolia* were highlights of this part of the trip.

We enventually found Woolshed Falls and spent an hour or so there before going on the summit of Mount Pilot, which was also burnt last summer. Some of the plants such as wattles and had benefited and there were millions of seedlings along the path to the top. Lesley and I walked a little way down from the cars to be picked up further down the track, where we'd spotted an

interesting rock platform on the way up. We found Blunt Greenhoods, and masses of pink Early Nancys growing in the moss - and more buttercups.
At the motel itself there was a grevillia which was full of honeyeaters and silvereyes each morning. I watched Brown-headed Honeyeaters and Tasmanian Silvereyes while I ate my breakfast on the verandah on the second morning.
It was a most enjoyable few days exploring the area. So much more is seen with a group, and sharing your enjoyment with others I'm sure multiplies the pleasure.
Thank you Ern and Lesley for arranging this "Campout" for us.

Rita Mills

Bird Watching at Chiltern

Last month a group of CFNC members spent several days at Chiltern. It is a good place to see birds, and we recorded 89 species during our stay. We did not manage to see Regent Honeyeaters, but there were many highlights, including:

Welcome Swallows soaring to and from the Magenta Mine open cut. They were nesting. They flew straight at us, veering away only when they noticed us. A Yellow Robin was sharing the mine, favouring a rocky perch on the mine wall.

Fairy Martins in number, soaring just above head height beside the creek in Chiltern.

A **Darter** perching in full view on the dredge at Eldorado.

Royal Spoonbills beside the road at Chiltern No 1 dam.

The juvenile **White-breasted Sea Eagle** soaring overhead at Eldorado.

The **Cuckoos** - Fan Tailed, Pallid and Horsfield Bronze-cuckoos were seen or heard.

The **Friarbirds** - we saw both the Noisy and Little Friarbirds.

The male **Mistletoe Bird** in full view.

The **Black-Chinned Honeyeaters**.

The **Brown Treecreeper** at Honeyeater picnic area, coming for a free meal.

The handsome **Crested Shrike-tit**, only a few metres away and close to ground level.

A bird list for the stay is available on request.

Ern Perkins

Significant and Notable Trees

At various times there have been proposals to compile a list of notable trees in the district. Much information is already at hand. We have, for instance, those classified by the National Trust.

It would be a good club project to continue with the compilation. We would aim to include trees of particular interest, commemorative planting (for

example to Yellow Box planted in Urquart Street to celebrate the CFNC anniversary), size, rarity or other feature of interest. Both indigenous, non-indigenous and exotic species could be included.

What do you think? Who would be willing to help in such a project?

Ern Perkins.

SEANA Autumn Campout

Fri. Mar 11 - Mon. Mar 14 2005

Host Club- Upper Goulburn Field Naturalists' Club

Venue - Eildon Mountain Lodge, 20 km from Alexandra and 8 km from Thornton.

Accommodation - The Lodge and a Bunkhouse will accommodate up to 150. Pillows and bottom sheets provided . Own sleeping bag or doona, linen, towels etc. (good motel units on site may be booked privately before 30 Nov. 2004.) No camp or caravan site at the Lodge but several caravan parks (listed in full in info. sheet) within reasonable distance of the Lodge - recommended that you make your own arrangements immediately.

Catering - All meals provided from Friday dinner until Monday lunch. Special dietary requirements provided for. Dining room is BYO with licensed premises on site. Tea and coffee as required.

Costs - For **catering** - full camp - $174, part camp (exc. Friday dinner) $153. Meals only as ordered : b'fast $9, lunch $10, dinner and supper $21, per person.

There will be charge (to be advised) if you are visiting **Snobs Creek** Freshwater Discovery Centre.

There is a **registration fee**, whether you participate in all or part of the camp, of $20 per person.

Guest Speakers, Andy Miller, Chief Ranger Parks Vic. Eildon, Dr. Kevin Tolhurst, Snr. Lecturer Fire Ecology & Management, University of Melb. Another speaker to be confirmed, on Native Fish, or Waterways.

Fuller details, as available at this stage, and registration form available at the general meeting or from the secretary.

Windows on Birds - and a Narrow Escape.

Annette Chester was watching wrens and Silvereyes darting around near her Pyrenean Mountain Dogs and wondered whatever was going on, so she decided to watch. When one of the dogs settled down to rest the birds would dart in to tug at the soft coat, persisting until the dog objected. Annette could see one bird clearly and it had a row of single hairs neatly lined up in its beak, all ready to take back to the nest it was building. Some little birds are going to have wonderfully soft white beds this year!

Another wren story came from Sue Kennedy at Moyston. She watched for quite a few minutes while a pair of Superb Fairy-wrens cuddled and

preened just outside her window, with the male occasionally attacking the window, and then going back to his very affectionate mate.

Peggy Munro watched in amazement as a raptor swooped down on a mouse between her house and shed, only feet from the window. It stayed on the ground for a couple of minutes with the mouse gripped in its talons while it gazed from side to side, and finally flew off while Peggy just stood and watched, getting an excellent view of it. Minutes later another (?) bird swooped and took a small bird from between the window and the verandah post, but that was too quick for Peggy to see what it was. She checked in her bird book and was satisfied that her first visitor was a male Collared Sparrowhawk.

While taking a walk along the railway line on the morning of 20/9 Doug Mills and the dog he was walking, disturbed a fox which raced off but left its prey, a Common Bronzewing. Doug wasn't sure whether it had actually caught the bird which fluttered , but then flew off strongly.

Wednesday Wildflower Walks

Youngman's Track, Wattle Flat

15/9/04 Leader, Rita Mills

Seeing four different species of Greenhood orchids in bud/flower were a highlight of the first wildflower walk.

Many wildflowers are late this year, presumably because of the cold weather. For example, we saw no Waxlips and few Pink-bells in flower.

The indigenous plants I saw in flower were:

Acacia acinacea Gold-dust Wattle
A. aspera Rough Wattle
A. pycnantha Golden Wattle
Caledenia sp.* Pink Fingers
Craspedia variabilis Billy Buttons
Diurus pardina Leopard Orchid
Hakea decurrans Bushy Needlewood
Pterostylus curta Blunt Greenhood
P. melagramma Tall Greenhood (just finished flowering)
Hardenbergia violacea Native Sarsparilla
P. nana Dwarf Greenhood
P. nutans Nodding Greenhood
Hovea heterophylla Common Hovea
Stuartina muelleri Spoon Cudweed
Luzula meridionalis Woodrush
Tetratheca cilliata Pink Bells
Rhytidosporum procumbens White Marianth
Wurmbea dioca Early Nancy

* Which Caledenia did we see? I thought it was *C. fuscata*, Dusky Fingers, but Rita Mills thought it was *C. carnea*, Pink Fingers. On consulting the "Flora of Victoria", I have now become confused. It says (vol. 2 p 177)

"Lateral lobes of labellum protruding forward and embracing the column; exterior of perianth segments generally brownish all over, dry forest..."

..... *C. fuscata*

"Lateral lobes of labellum hardly protruding forward and not tightly embracing column; outside of perianth segments greenish, pink or with central brownish band." .....*C. carnea*

The Castlemaine plant list records 4 taxa in the Pink Fingers group, including 3 for Wattle Flat; *C. carnea*, *C. fuscata* and *C. pusella*, Tiny Pink Fingers. Any offers to unconfuse me would be welcome!

Margaret Panter

Harcourt Nature Reserve

22/9/04 Leader, Margaret Panter

Again there were about 26 people joined the walk, more than half visitors, including several children. After a few days of warm sunshine there were many more plants in flower. Leopard Orchids, Pink Fingers and Gold-dust Wattle seemed to be the predominant species in flower. There are quite a few weed species around the edge of the area as is often the case of a reserve in the centre of farmland or within the town boundaries.

Plants recorded for the afternoon were: (plants already recorded for the previous walk only have the common name given)

Acacia paradoxa Hedge Wattle
Davisia ulicifolia Gorse Bitter Pea
Native Sarsparilla
Drosera macranthra Climbing Sundew
Pink Bells
Grevillea alpina Downy Grevillea
Philotheca verrucosus Fairy Waxflower
Caledenia carnea var. carnea Pink Fingers
Caledenia pusilla Tiny Caledenia
Caledenia sp. Greencomb group
Glossodia major Waxlip Orchid
Gold-dust Wattle
Common Hovea
Billy Buttons
D peltata ssp auriculata Erinalum or Tall Sundew
Woodrush
Microseris scapigera Yam Daisy
Xerochrysum viscosum Sticky Everlasting
Early Nancy
Leopard Orchid
Tall Greenhood
Dwarf Greenhood
Eucalyptus microcarpa Grey Box

There was also Gorse, which was used for hedges in the early days, Tree Lucerne which was (and sometimes still is) used for fodder, and Spanish Heath which was a garden plant.

Rita Mills and Lisa Hall

Observations

• George Broadway spotted quite large carp in Lake Johanna recently. He felt it would be of great concern if the lake finally floods again and they get into Barkers Creek. He also reported just one Boobook Owl in the tree in the gardens. At home the resident Bluetongue appeared on 21/9.

• Ern Perkins was able to claim two Pacific Black Ducks in the back garden at their place.

• Bruce Donaldson, who lives at Kerry near Woodend, reported watching Boobooks checking to see if there were any frogs missed after the pair had cleaned all of them up earlier in the month.

• Albert Golden brought along a Whip Snake which survived after he rescued it from the wood heater when he saw movement through the glass. He was going to release it again when he got home.

• Richard Piesse on his many walks these days is finding much to report. On Poverty Gully Water-race on 29/8 he found Wax-flower, Early Nancy, White Marianth, Gorse Bitter-pea, Hardenbergia, Hovea and Golden, Gold-dust, Spreading, Early Black and Woolly Wattles all in flower. On the Maldon Railway line on 6/9 he found over 300 Leopard Orchids, Pink Fingers and Blue Fingers, Yam Daisies, Early Nancys and 4 acacias in flower. On the Kalimna Tourist road on 16/9 he found lots of Leopard Orchids, Pink Bells, Gorse Bitter Pea, Wax-flowers, *Hakea decurrens, Grevillea alpina* (three different colours), Hardenbergia, Billy Buttons, and Spreading, Gold-dust and Woolly Wattles. On the Monk with Ern Perkins on 21/9 he added a sea of yellow Billy Buttons, Golden Moths and Red Spider Orchids to his list., plus more Leopard Orchids and Pink Fingers. He went out with the Taradale Walking Group on 22/9, into the bush behind Elphinstone, and was surprised to find no obvious sign of orchids on the Green Track/Bills Track area at all, "not even a Greenhood".

• George Broadway found masses of Nodding Greenhoods near the rock outcrop on the Dingo Farm end of Poverty Gully track.

• Debbie Worland was still continuing to note 40 - 50 Swift Parrots adjacent to the Castlemaine Golf Course into September.

FROM THE BUSINESS MEETING 24/9/04

• **Threatened Species Network**. More surveys need to be done this Spring. Jenni Collier will supply anyone who can do the surveys with a list of areas which need to be covered. Please Contact Jenni.

• It was decided to do another **Roadside Cleanup** on **Saturday Oct. 23 at 9 am.** Bring a drink, and wear suitable clothing, inc. sturdy footwear and a hat. Meet outside Taits Carriages, Pyrenees H'way. Safety jacket, gloves and rubbish bags provided.

• The **Kalimna Preservation Society** has asked us to do a follow up survey of the area covered last year. **Meet at 8.30 am in Andrews St.**, between Mostyn and Lyttleton Sts. **on Fri. Oct. 15.**

• It was resolved that we send **$500** from the conservation fund **to Birds Australia,** stating that we would like it to go towards the **Swift Parrot program**, especially targetting the Castlemaine area.

Landcare makes a difference.

For some years, Lesley and I have been recording birds in about ten two hectare blocks of land. We count the birds we see in the block in 20 minutes. We try to visit each block once a month.

Over the past few days we have been to

c: Chinamans Point where Golden Point Landcare has planted hundreds native plants. Some mature trees are present.

s: Spring Gully turnoff - regrowth bushland beside the Fryerstown Road..

f: Fryerstown Cemetery - one of our favourite bird spots. Has many large trees.

y: Youngmans Corner in Wattle Flat Forest - it was burned in 1998. Regrowth forest with very sparse understorey.

l: Lewis Road, lined with large eucalypts and through farm land.

w: Walmer Flora Reserve - regrowth bushland on the Muckleford-Walmer Road. Some large trees.

W: Walmer School Road, a tree and shrub lined road north of the Muckleford-Walmer Road.

The birds seen	c	s	f	y	l	w	W
Brown Goshawk					1		
Galah			4		4	1	1
Long-billed Corella	2		2		3		
Eastern Rosella	2				4		
Crimson Rosella	1		3				
Musk Lorikeet					9		2
Willie Wagtail			2				1
Grey Fantail	4						
Superb Fairy-wren	2						4
White-br. Scrubwren	2						
Grey Shr.-thrush	1						
Yellow-rump T'bill	1						
Striated Thornbill	4						
Red Wattle Bird	2		2		3	6	
Noisy Miner					8		
Fuscous Honeyeater			9+			9+	
Yellow-faced H'e	2						
Yellow-tufted H'e			2				
White-plumed H'e							1
White-eared H'e		1					
New Holland H'e	1		9+				
Spotted Pardalote	2						
Red-browed Firetail	2						
Magpie					4		3
Aust Raven							2
Total species	**14**	**1**	**8**	**0**	**7**	**4**	**7**

This is a typical set of figures for our sites.

This is a small sample, but there appears to be a strong correlation between bird numbers and the size and age of the trees. A varied understorey, and a variety of habitats also appear to be important. And it shows that Landcare can make a difference.

Em Perkins

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Programme- September 04

General meetings are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 8.00 pm on the second Friday of each month, except January.

Excursions are usually on the Saturday following the general meeting and leave promptly at the times stated from The Octopus, opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days. BYO morning and afternoon tea.

Business meetings are held at 27 Doveton Street on the fourth Thursday of each month, except December, at 7.30 pm. All members are invited to attend.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB MEETINGS AND EXCURSIONS.

Wed. Oct. 6. ***Wildflower Walk (4).*** Frances Cincotta, Ph. 5476 2691. Octopus 4pm.

Fri. Oct. 8. ***Macquarie Island and Penguins.*** Pauline Reilley. UCA Hall, 8pm.

Sat. Oct. 9. ***Humbolt – Taradale/Drummond Road.*** Leader: Ern Perkins, Ph 5472 3124 . Leave the Octopus at 1.30 sharp.

Wed. Oct. 13. ***Wildflower Walk (5).*** Richard Piesse, Ph. 5472 3191. Octopus 4pm.

Fri. Oct. 15 *Survey of Grassland, Kalimna Park boundary.* 8.30am Andrews St. Details p.7, bus. meeting notes.

Sat. Oct. 23 *Roadside Cleanup* 9 am. Details p.7 bus meeting notes.

Fri. 29 Oct. – Tues. Nov. 2. ***SEANA Campout at Little Desert Nature Lodge.***

Fri. Nov.12. ***Wombat Community Forest Management*** Tim Anderson. UCA Hall 8pm

Sat. Nov. 13. ***South German Mine Area, Maldon.*** Leader: Ern Perkins, Ph. 5472 3124. Leave Octopus at 1.30pm sharp. Good birding - bring binoculars.

Sat. Dec. 4 Annual Bird Challenge. Details next month. Be ready to help, even if you don't know your birds you can record.

Fri. Dec. 10. ***Members and Visitors Night.*** A traditional "Show and Tell" night. Bring along a few slides to share of a favourite place or subject, a book review, an anecdote of one of the highlights of your club outings, etc, etc. - that should give you something to start with! Bring a plate of supper. 8pm UCA hall.

Sat Dec. 11 ***St Georges Lake, Creswick.*** Times to be arranged at Dec. Meeting.

2004 Committee - Chris Morris (President) Ph. 9885 4221; Rita Mills (Vice President and Public Officer) Ph. 54724553; George Broadway (Secretary) Ph. 5472 2513; Hans van Gemert (Treasurer) Ph. 5472 1082; Geraldine Harris (Newsletter Ed.) Ph. 5474 2244; Ern Perkins Ph. 5472 3124; Richard Piesse; Athol Dorman and Nigel Harland.

Subscriptions for 2004

Ordinary membership: Single $22, Family $30

Pensioner or student: Single $19, Family $24

The subscription includes postage of the *Castlemaine Naturalist.*

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc., PO Box 324, Castlemaine. Inc #A0003010B